

OF THE
BIOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTONGENERIC NAMES OF THE FOUR-EYED POUCH
OPOSSUM AND THE WOOLLY OPOSSUM (*Didelphidae*)

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Published opinions on the status of *Philander* Tiedemann (Zoologie, vol. 1, p. 426, 1808) are not convincing for lack of evidence that the work cited had been carefully studied or even consulted. Tiedemann's system of classification is Linnaean with names for all hierarchies recognized (orders, families, genera, species) properly proposed and, for his time, adequately diagnosed. The following abstract from the "Zoologie" exposes the nature of the name *Philander*.

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Geschlecht 1.

Opossum. *Philander* (*Didelphys* L.)
(Sarigue)

[Generic description follows]

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[Description continued]

Es gibt gegen 10 bekannten Arten:

- 1) Das Virginische Opossum. *P. virginianus* (Did. opossum L.)
(le sarigue Buff. T. X. p. 279.)

Körper röthlich braun. Ueber jedem Auge ein gelblich weiser Flecken. Schwanz so lang als der Leib.

1 Fuss und 3 Zoll lang ohne den Schwanz.

In Virginien, Mexico, Peru u. s. w.

Schreb. tab. 146, A. B.

Edw. Tyson Carigueya seu marsupiale Americanum or the anatomy of an opossum. Philos. Transact. V. 1698. p. 105, V. 1704, p. 1576.

William Cowper an account of the anatomy of those parts of a male opossum that differ from the female. Ibid. V. 1704. p. 1576.

- 2) Das mausartige Opossum *P. murinus* (Did. murina L.) (la marmose Buff. T. X. p. 335.)

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[Specific description follows]

- 3) Das kurzgeschwänzte Opossum. *P. brachyurus* (Did. brachyuros Penn.) (le touan Cuvier Tabl. Element. d'hist. nat. p. 125.)

[Specific description follows]

The above three species are all that were included in the genus *Philander*. It is perfectly clear from the description and the references to Buffon, Linnaeus and Schreber, that the first species *P. virginianus* is merely a new name for the four-eyed pouch opossum, *Didelphis opossum* Linnaeus. The second species is a *Marmosa*, the third a *Monedelphis*. As *P. virginianus* is virtually tautonymic, it is here designated

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genotype of *Philander* Tiedemann. Designation of the woolly opossum, *Didelphis philander* Linnaeus, as genotype by Thomas (Catalogue of the Marsupialia and Monotremata in the collection of the British Museum, p. 336, 1888) is untenable. In reality, the *Philander* of Thomas and subsequent authors is the homonym *Philander* Burmeister 1856, with type *Didelphis philander* Linnaeus.

Arguments presented by Allen (Bull. Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist., vol. 13, pp. 188-189, 1900) against usage of *Philander* Tiedemann stem from a misunderstanding of the original composition of the genus and are not relevant. Nevertheless, Allen's substitution of his own *Caluromys* (*D. philander* Linnaeus type) for *Philander* authors (not Tiedemann), is accidentally valid. Tate's (*Ibid.*, vol. 76, p. 164, 1939) rejection of *Philander* Tiedemann is based primarily on the misidentification of *P. virginianus* as a *Didelphis*, and secondarily on the "homonymity" with *Philander* Brisson, 1762. This last in spite of the fact that Tate (*op. cit.* p. 161) listed *Philander* Brisson as an unavailable synonym of *Metachirops* Matschie! With all due respect for Tate's doubtful endorsement, Brisson's system of classification is non-Linnaean and merits no consideration. Furthermore, it already has been shown by Hopwood (Proc. Zool. Soc. London, vol. 117, p. 533, 1947), that Brisson's generic names are pre-Linnaean and unavailable in any case. Hopwood (*op. cit.* p. 535) erred, however, in naming "*Didelphys philander* Linnaeus" the genotype of *Philander* Tiedemann. In addition, he disinterred *Philander* Gronovius, 1763, with the same genotype designated. Names by Gronovius are no better than those of Brisson and need not be revived at this late date (*cf.* Opinion 89, International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature).

To avoid the possibility of future confusion, disposition must be made of two other and unused generic names each with several species including those under discussion. Genotype of *Gamba* Liais (Climats, geol. faune et geogr. bot. Bresil, p. 329, 1872) is here designated *Gamba palmata* Liais (= *Chironectes minimus* Zimmermann); genotype of *Cuica* Liais (*loc. cit.*) is here designated *Cuica murina* Liais (= *Marmosa murina* Linnaeus).

Pertinent data presented are summarized in the following synonymies,

Genus *Philander* Tiedemann (Four-eyed pouch opossums).

Philander Tiedemann, Zoologie, vol. 1, p. 426, 1808 (genotype, *P[hilander] virginianus* Tiedemann = *Didelphis opossum* Linnaeus).

Metachirops Matschie, Sitz-ber. Gessellsch. naturforsch. Fr. Berlin, p. 268, 1916 (genotype, *Didelphis opossum* Linnaeus).

Holothylax Cabrera, Genera Mammalium, (Monotremata, Marsupialia), Mus. Nac. Cien. Nat., Madrid, p. 47, 1919 (genotype, *Didelphis opossum* Linnaeus).

Genus *Caluromys* Allen (Woolly opossums).

Philander Burmeister, Erläuterungen Fauna Brasiliens, p. 74, Berlin 1856 (genotype, *Philander cayopollin* Burmeister = *Didelphis philander* Linnaeus; homonym of *Philander* Tiedemann, 1808).

Caluromys Allen, Bull. Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist., vol. 13, p. 189, 1900 (genotype, *Didelphis philander* Linnaeus).

Micoureus Matschie, Sitz-ber. Gesellsch. naturforsch. Fr. Berlin, pp. 259, 269 (genotype, *Didelphis laniger* Desmarest = *D. lanata* Olfers; homonym of *Micoureus* Lesson, 1842).

Mallodelphys Thomas, Ann. Mag. Nat. Hist., ser. 9, vol. 5, p. 195, 1920 (substitute name for *Micoureus* Matschie).